CHURCH NEWS

FROM THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES

HOLBROOK LIBRARY PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

Edited by
THE NORTHERN ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE
Sigtuna, Sweden

Director: Dr. HARRY JOHANSSON, Sigtuna, Sweden
Editor: Rev. JOHS. LANGHOFF, Øster Egesborg per Mern, Denmark

No. 71 June 16th, 1961.

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Northern Co-operation on Materials for Sunday Schools.

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Disabled Refugees for Northern Countries.

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Northern Chorale Book Published.

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The financial means for this effort on behalf of "forgotten" re- ugees have been provided by funds collected during the World Refugee ear.

DENMARK

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Some time this month a Bill about increased aid to developing ountries is expected to be introduced in the Danish "Folketing" Parliament) although it will probably not be passed until in the utumn. In its report a Government Commission advocates that the anish aid be increased to 50-100 million Danish Crowns in the course f the next few years and that, later on, the proposal of the United ations for national grants to equal 1 % of the national income be ollowed - which in this case would amount to 400 million Danish Crowns

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he Part of Foreign Missions in Aid to Developing Countries.

Should the Church and the Christian foreign missions take part in the official aid to developing countries? The question is being care- fully considered in Denmark at the moment, the Prime Minister, Mr. Viggo Kampmann, having said that he thought it natural for the State to support the humanitarian undertakings of Foreign Missions by giving grants to the solution of certain more comprehensive single enterprises.

This whole issue of the relation between religious and humanitarian assistance was discussed recently at a meeting arranged by the "Kirke- ligt Samfund" (the Grundtvigian section of the Lutheran National Church) With these discussions in mind Mr. Avel Riishøj, Diocesan Principal, in an article in the "Højskolebladet" suggests that in developing countries where such an arrangement is desirable and natural the re- ligious organizations should take up humanitarian schemes while they should refrain from it in countries where the authorities want a clear distinction between humanitarian aid and religious activities. "For a long time to come a certain miving up of religious work with humani- tarian assistance must be expected and, in the circumstances, perhaps this is the best arrangement", writes Mr. Riishøj, who is otherwise fundamentally in favour of keeping the preaching of the gospel distinct- ly apart from humanitarian endeavours.

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The financial means for this effort on behalf of "Norgesten" refugees have been provided by funds collected during the World Refugee Year.

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On the occasion of the coming integration of the World Council of urches and the International Missionary Council the Church of Denmark uncil on Inter-Church Relations, in co-operation with the Danish Mis- onary Council, has issued a sticker in colours, drawn by the church chitect, Mr. Holger Jensen. The sticker is printed in sheets of 50, aring the common ecumenical symbol of the ship with a cruciform mast d depicting church life in a number of countries all over the world. e proceeds of the sale will go partly to ecumenical enterprises, rtly to Foreign Missions.

utheran Stewardship Conference.

From May 23rd to 27th the international conference of the Lutheran orld Federation on "Stewardship in Relation to the Living Congrega- ion" was held in Copenhagen and attended by 50-60 representatives of utheran churches in 11 countries. The conference was opened by ishop W. Westergaard Madsen, Copenhagen, who emphasized the need for ellowship within the Christian Church at the present day. In small ommittees as well as in big joint meetings the members of the confe- ence discussed a number of topics in connection with Christian ser- ices in and by the congregation. One of the mornings the conference embers were the guests of the City of Copenhagen at a reception at he Town Hall. In his address the Mayor, Mr. Urban Hansen, stressed he point that the authorities need the help of the Church in solving number of urgent problems of society, not the least among them the roblems connected with the young people. In this matter especially he contribution of the individual is of great importance.

t. Peter Without the Cock - and With It!

In an article in the "Økumeniske Nyheder", published by the Ecu- menical Council of Denmark, Mr. Johannes Aagaard, University Lecturer, reminds the readers that in Primitive Christian art the Apostle Peter is often depicted with a cock, symbolizing his denial of Christ. Mr. Aagaard finds nothing wrong in the Pope in Rome claiming to be the representative of St. Peter in an extraordinary way - provided it is "Peter with the cock". St. Paul paid deference to St. Peter by, among other things, opposing him when he denied the truth of the Gospel (Gal. 2), and so did Luther in standing up to the Pope.

"But precisely at these occasions it turned out that they were dealing with a "Peter without the cock". Because, instead of admitt- ing his fault - instead of going outside and crying bitterly, at least when the cock crowed the third time - this "Peter" hardened his heart and blew the unity of the Church into a thousand pieces so as not to hear the protestations of the Gospel.

The protesting part never left the Church. They waited - and waited a long time - for "Peter" to hear the crowing of the cock. They are still waiting. And should the time have come when "Peter" in Rome has grown tired of banging the doors in order to assert his own infallibility - should it on this day turn out to be, not just a "Peter", but "Peter with the cock" who is occupying the episcopal chair in Rome, we should all rejoice in regarding him as our favourite bishop - Peter, who was one of the Apostolic leaders, the comforter of souls above all others because he, above anyone else, would know from experience what it means to fail!

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FINLAND

rch Assembly Committee in Favour of Women Pastors.

The Committee set up in 1958 by the Church Assembly in Finland drawing up a report on the issue of giving women access to the clesiastical office, from the point of view of principle, has declared itself in favour of women ministers by 4 votes to 1. The majority of the Committee, the Chairman of which is Professor Aimo T. kolainen, gives 7 reasons for its standpoint, the first and most portant one stating the view of the New Testament on this matter.

The report points out that in the Primitive Church women performed number of services which in our days are part of the ministry, such for instance, the preaching of the gospel or evangelization, the ading in prayer at divine services, and diaconal activities. New stament says nothing about who should administer the sacraments. the other hand, however, the Primitive Church found it necessary forbid women to preach or teach in public. It is thus impossible find an equivalent of our present ecclesiastical office as such in e New Testament although it has developed from the congregational fice of the Primitive Church, and consequently, it is not possible transfer the tasks and distribution of services of New Testament mes to our time in a direct and mechanical way.

In the New Testament and in the Lutheran Confession the main oint of view is that the gospel must be preached unadulterated and he sacraments administered rightly. To make the validity of the ospel and the effect of the sacraments fundamentally and exclusively dependent on a male clergy is the same as imposing on the grace God and on the gospel a restriction which is denied by New Testament, the report goes on. New Testament teaches the equality in Christ f man and woman and has thus instituted a development which has led o women accepting responsibility for tasks of ever increasing importance.

Luther did not consider women suited for the service of preaching, ut in as much as woman, in concordance with the doctrine of universal riesthood, is entitled to the office of preaching, the majority of he Committee feels that, considering the changes in social conditions, t must be a question whether Luther's attitude should not result in omen being now regarded as entitled also to the ecclesiastical ministry.

Besides the Chairman, the members of the Committee in favour of omen ministers are Dr. Eira Paunu, D.D., Professor Helge Nyman, and r. Lemmikki Kekomäki, Member of the Supreme Administrative Court, hile Dr. Erkki Kurki-Sounio, D.D., is opposed to it. A proposal or allowing women to take orders will be introduced at the Church ssembly in 1963, but it must be accepted by 3/4 of the delegates in rder to go further to Parliament. At present 40 % of the divinity tudents at Helsinki (Helsingfors) and Turku (Åbo) are women.

ritical Time in the Laestadian Movement.

Laestadianism, one of the four great revivalist movements within he Lutheran National Church in Finland and named after the lay reacher Laestadius, is passing through a crisis at present. Like he other revivalist movements Laestadianism is based on the Lutheran

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Critical Time in the Lazzaretian Movement.

Lazzaretianism, one of the four great revivalist movements within the Lutheran National Church in Finland and dating after the 18th century Laestadius, is passing through a crisis at present. Like the other revivalist movements Lazzaretianism is based on the Lutheran

fession, but at the annual meeting last year the majority of the ement rejected the proposal of one of its ministers that it should p to the Confession of the Church. Since then, certain ministers e been prohibited from addressing the gatherings of the movement some of them have had to give up their honorary offices.

hbishop Paavali on Women Ministers and Intercommunion. --

In an interview in the "Kotimaa" the Head of the Orthodox Church Finland, Archbishop Paavali, has dealt with ecumenical problems, ong other things. In this connection the Archbishop has declared at the Lutheran Church will be entering a difficult path if the urch Assembly passes the proposal adopted by the majority of the mmittee (see above) for allowing women to take Holy Orders. The ctrine of successio apostolica leaves no room for a clergy of women, id the Archbishop, who is also opposed to the request for intercommun- on between the Orthodox and the non-Orthodox Churches issued by the umenical youth conference at Lausanne.

he Church Neglects the Message of Salvation in Favour of Social tivities."

Recently a deputation, representing various Church circles in nland, approached Archbishop Ilmari Salomies, expressing its concern out the Church letting the Bible message of salvation recede more and re into the background and concentrating instead on religious-social tivities.

"It may be true that the Church tries to get in touch with diffe- nt sections of the population, although not in order to preach the spel of salvation to them, but rather in order to draw people into he more external work of the Church", the statement reads and main- ains that the youth work of the Church is gradually taking the form f entertainment. -- --

The deputation expressed its deep anxiety at this development nd hoped that the message of salvation of the Scriptures might nce more become the pivot of the life of the Church and its preaching.

ishop G.O. Rosenqvist Deceased.

The Bishop of Borgå (Porvoo) Dr. G.O. Rosenqvist died after only few days' illness on June 8th. As Professor of Theology at the wedish Academy at Åbo (Turku) 1930-1954 and the Rector of the Academy 942-1954 Bishop Rosenqvist was one of the front-rank personages in he cultural and ecclesiastical life of Finland. His years as Bishop n the Swedish-speaking diocese of the Lutheran National Church of inland 1954-1961 were a period of immense activity in all fields, nd he enjoyed general confidence also in the Finnish-speaking part f the Church.

In the cultural and ecumenical co-operation between the Northern ountries Bishop Rosenqvist was since decades one of the most prominent epresentatives of Finland. He took active part in a great number of orthern conferences. Since 1940 he was a member of the General Commit- ee of the Northern Ecumenical Institute at Sigtuna and many times e was the President of the Committee. During and after the second orld War he gave a unique contribution to the maintaining or the re-

stablishing of the connections between the Northern churches. The eath of Bishop Rosenqvist means a heavy loss to the churches of the orthern countries.

ews in Brief:

The Enlarged Bishops' Conference in Finland has set up a Music ommittee which is to deal with matters concerning sacred music in onnection with church organizations and to extend the orbit of acred music in various ways.

Last month some 20 Swedish-speaking authors and ministers in inland were assembled for a conference at the "Lärkulla-Foundation" t which a number of topics under the common heading of "Man and is Problems" were discussed. The conference was arranged by the wedish Authors' Association in Finland and the Home Mission Board of the Swedish Diocese.

NORWAY

Norwegian Missionary Council Says No to World Council or Churches.

The Norwegian Missionary Council has resolved by 14 votes to 9 ot to enter into consultative membership with the new Commission on World Mission and Evangelism to be set up at the integration in the autumn of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches. Last autumn the Norwegian Missionary Council by all votes but one decided not to join the Commission as ordinary ember.

Among the organizations voting in favour of consultative membership was the Norwegian Missionary Society, the majority of its National Board being in favour of such a status. According to the rules of the Norwegian Missionary Council the affiliated organizations are free to take up connections individually with international missionary bodies.

More Religious Classes in the Schools?

The Committee on Church and Education, set up by the "Stortinget" Parliament), has passed a resolution advocating more school hours in religious instruction, and the abolition of instruction in modern ball-room dancing as part of the physical training programme. The Labour Party majority of the Commission suggests 16 1/2 classes weekly during 9 years of school instead of the 14 1/2 hours contained in the syllabus drawn up by the Curriculum Committee. Two Labour Members, however, find the 14 1/2 classes to be sufficient, while the non-Socialist Members advocate 21 classes a week. The omission of ball-room dancing was advocated by all non-Socialist and two Labour Party Members of the Commission.

Warning against Accepting Government Funds for Foreign Missions.

In an article in the religious daily in Oslo "Vårt Land" the Vice Chairman of the Foreign Missions Section of the Lutheran World Federation, Dr. Sigurd Aske, firmly opposes the suggestion that Christian foreign missions should accept support for their work from

official funds in aid of developing countries. Dr. Aske refers to the deliberations in January at the meeting in Harbour of the Foreign Missions Section which concluded in that Protestant Foreign Missions ought not to accept official support for their work in Africa and Asia, and the article ends:

"It seems to me that this is one of the most delicate questions facing the Foreign Missions all over the world at the present and it will probably become still more pressing in the near future. Public opinion in the different countries has a peculiar power to influence church leaders in such a way that sensible and sound standpoints are abandoned in favour of more opportunistic views which are then adopted in self-defence and given pleasant designations. Government grants to developing countries are politically dictated at bottom, it must be realized, and although the money is said to be given unconditionally, experience shows that there are, nevertheless, strings attached. Protestant Foreign Missions should not risk a self-inflicted accusation of being a political errand-boy."

Methodist World Conference in Oslo.

The 10th Methodist World Conference will take place in Oslo in August under the main theme of "New Life in the Spirit". This is the first time the Conference is held outside the English-speaking world. 1,500 representatives from 70 different countries are expected to take part in the meeting. At an ecumenical divine service in the Cathedral of Oslo short addresses will be delivered by the Secretary General of the World Council of Churches, Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, Dr. Martin Niemöller, Church President, Bishop Johannes Smemo, Norwegian Lutheran National Church, and representatives of the Norwegian Free Churches.

SWEDEN

Swedish-Scottish Intercommunion Agreement Ratified.

The official report on the Scottish-Swedish theological conference at Sigtuna in April and the ratification of the intercommunion agreement between the Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the Lutheran National Church of Sweden have now been published.

The report states that the conference noted that intercommunion already existed between the two Churches and that the term was interpreted to mean that members of the one Church might freely communicate in the other. Intercelebration was not discussed and was not included in the agreement. The conference approved that the acceptance of intercommunion between the two Churches also involved mutual acknowledgement of the ecclesiastical offices and sacraments of the Churches. In this connection reference is made to the statement submitted at the Lambeth Conference in 1922 by the Swedish delegation on behalf of the Bishops' Conference: "In the question of intercommunion our Church has not attached decisive weight either to the doctrine of the Ministry in general or to what is usually called the Apostolical Succession of Bishops and the questions thereby implied."

At their last conference the Swedish Bishops with pleasure accepted the report on the theological conference and approved the interpretation of the importance and extent of the existing intercommunion agreement contained in it. The Committee for Inter-Church Relations of the Church of Scotland has likewise recommended that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland accept the report and ratify its interpretation of the term of intercommunion. The Committee advocates that the Swedish Archbishop be invited as the guest of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1962 and that a conference for theologians from the Scottish and all the National Churches in the Northern countries be arranged for 1963.

Uninterrupted Intercommunion with the Anglican Church.

In a resolution the Lower House of the Convocation of York expresses approval that the rule that communicating members of the Lutheran National Church of Sweden may take part in the Eucharist services of the Anglican Church remains unchanged.

It was feared by some that the ordination in Sweden of women ministers might result in the cancelling of the intercommunion agreement. This did not happen, however, although the resolution requests the House of Lords to avoid Anglican participation in Swedish episcopal consecrations until the situation in the Swedish National Church has been more clarified.

Conservative Party Requests More Ecclesiastical Offices.

In a statement to the Government the Conservative Party in Sweden advocates that the number of clergymen in the Swedish Lutheran National Church be increased in proportion to the increase in population. The recommendation was caused by the Crown Lands Judiciary Board having considerably reduced the number of Church livings, especially in country districts, in connection with its treatment of a proposal by the Cathedral Chapters for a new distribution of benefices. The Conservative Party advocates that the proposal of the Cathedral Chapters be complied with.

Free Church Debate on Relations between State and Church.

Last month the Joint Committee of the Free Churches in Sweden conducted the first of a series of discussions on the future relations between the State and the religious communities. The discussions are part of the preparation for the Free Church reaction to the present considerations of a Government Committee on the relation between State and Church.

A special Free Church Committee has collected a large body of information which is to form the basis of the discussions and will be further examined in the near future. The discussions will deal with, among other things, the position of religious instruction in the schools, the right of the Church to levy tax, the issue of subsidies to religious communities, the position of the Theological Faculties, the keeping of Church records, and the possibility of contributions to church activities being exempted from taxation.

to Tax-Free Donations.

By 139 votes to 53 the Second Chamber of the Swedish Parliament has rejected a proposal for tax-free donations for religious and humanitarian purposes. A proposal that Government should give grants in equal proportion to contributions collected through voluntary donations was likewise turned down.

Harmless Church?

"The radical elements in the various cultural organizations find it increasingly difficult to carry out their wishful dream of locking up the Church in an isolated sector in our society where it might occupy itself with harmless 'purely religious' affairs of no moral or social consequence", an editorial in the weekly "Vår Kyrka" writes. The article refers to a remark in an article in the organ of the Trade Union movement in connection with a report on the conferences between the Church and the Trade Union movement to the effect that we are of the opinion that the Church should work within its own orbit".

"Vår Kyrka" mentions various fields in which the common interests and responsibilities of the Church and the professional organizations meet, and maintaining that such facts are being increasingly understood, goes on to explain the purpose of the conferences of contact arranged by the Swedish Home Mission Board.

Extensive Religious Activity at the Jönköping Industrial Fair.

The religious activity at the European Agricultural and Industrial Fair at Jönköping from May 25th to June 4th was quite considerable. The organizers of the Fair had omitted the usual entertainments section, including an open-air dance-floor, and instead invited the Religious Joint Committee at Jönköping, representing the Free Churches as well as the Lutheran National Church, to arrange a religious programme. On the two Sundays and every week-day evening there were divine services at a special open-air chapel as well as an exhibition of sacred arts.

No Changes for the Finnish and German Congregations.

The Swedish Parliament has rejected a proposal for an amendment to the rules concerning the Finnish congregation in Stockholm and the German congregations in Stockholm and Gothenburg (see CN No. 69). Finnish and German citizens in Stockholm and Gothenburg belonging to the Lutheran Church will continue to be members of the Finnish congregation in Stockholm or the German congregations in Stockholm or Gothenburg and not of the local Swedish parishes.

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By 159 votes to 59 the Second Chamber of the Swedish Parliament rejected a proposal for tax-free donations for religious and humanitarian purposes. A proposal that Government should give grants equal proportion to contributions collected through voluntary donations was likewise turned down.

Farmless Church.

"The radical elements in the various cultural organizations find increasingly difficult to carry out their useful stream of looking the Church in an isolated sector in our society where it might occupy itself with bearings 'purely religious' matters of no moral or social consequence", an editorial in the weekly "Var Kyrka" writes. The article refers to a remark in an article in the organ of the Trade Union movement in connection with a report on the conference between the Church and the Trade Union movement to the effect that "we are of the opinion that the Church should work within its own orbit".

"Var Kyrka" mentions various fields in which the common Lutheran and responsibilities of the Church and the professional organizations meet, and maintaining that such facts are being impressingly understood, goes on to explain the purpose of the conference of contact arranged by the Swedish Trade Union Institute Board.

Extensive Religious Activity at the European Agricultural and Industrial Fair at Jonkoping from May 25th to June 4th was quite considerable. The organizers of the Fair had omitted the Religious section, including an open-air chance-floor, and had granted invitation the Religious Joint Committee at Jonkoping, representing the Free Church as well as the Lutheran National Church, to arrange a religious programme. On the two Sundays and every week-day evening there were divine services at a special open-air chapel as well as an exhibition of sacred arts.

Changes for the Lutheran and German Congregations.

The Swedish Parliament has recently approved a proposal for an amendment to the rules concerning the Finnish congregation in Stockholm and the German congregations in Stockholm and Gothenburg (see GW No. 69). Finnish and German citizens in Stockholm and Gothenburg belonging to the Lutheran Church will continue to be members of the Finnish congregation in Stockholm or the German congregations in Stockholm or Gothenburg and not of the local Swedish parishes.